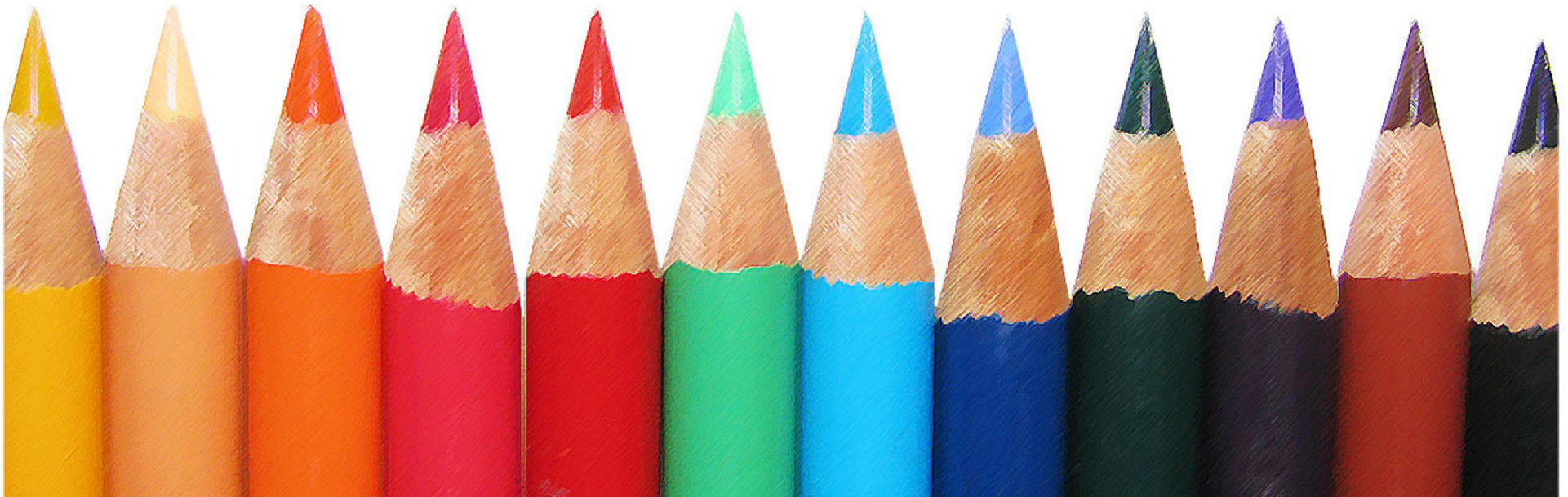


Stages of Report Preparation

Chapter 3



Some characteristics of reports



1. Everybody **hates** to write them,
2. Everybody **hates** to read them,
3. Almost nobody **does read** them,
4. They take a **HUGE** amount of time to write,
5. They are absolutely **CRUCIAL** to YOUR success in engineering!

Writing a good report

- Research information has limited value unless it is collected and published in a **usable form** and presented to those who may apply it.
- For these reasons **never assume** that your job is finished when the experimental or analytical phase has been completed.
- It is also your **responsibility** as an engineer or scientist to show promptly that your results are worthwhile and that you have reason to believe the field will be advanced by your efforts.



Stages of Reoprt Writing



1- Gathering the Data

- To become a successful technical writer, you should develop the ability to predict the general content of the report **before the program begins**.
- Report writing is **difficult enough** without having to recollect misplaced or unrecorded data.



1- Gathering the Data

- During the **data-gathering stage** consider how the data should be **presented** in the report and record the results in this manner.
- Any need for additional data will thus be revealed (allow to be seen/display) before the program is completed.



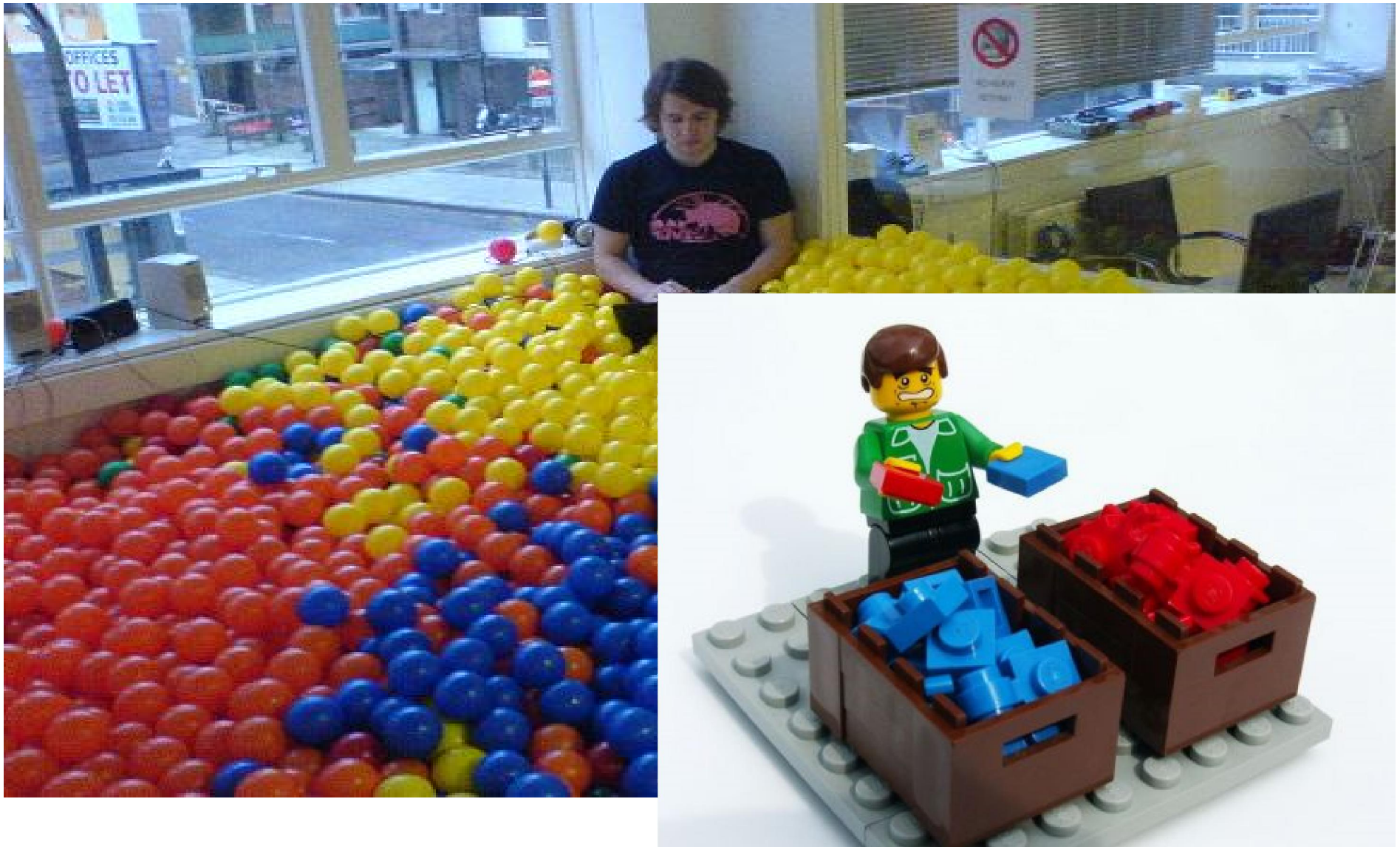
Where to find materials to write the report?

Examples are:

- Documents related to the project / work currently being done
- Google, Bing, Yahoo
- Google hacks/scripts (filetype, intitle, inurl, site)
- Journals (ex: Emeraldinsight.com, DOAJ.org, HighWire.stanford.edu)
- Scitopia.org
- Scirus.com
- Wolframalpha.com
- RSS readers – (Pageflakes.com)
- Newsgroup (Google Groups, Yahoogroups)
- Filesharing – Bittorent.com, Furk.net, Mininova.org
- Social site – Facebook, Myspace, Friendster
- Youtube.com, Metacafe.com etc.
- Reference, bibliography – Bibme.com
- Free Ebooks – Hongkiat.com - 20-best-websites-to-download-free-e-books. OPPapers.com – Research Papers and Essays



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- Data analysis and sorting, is probably the most difficult because it requires considerable mental effort to decide what you want to tell your readers.
- Data analysis should begin as the data are collected. But the bulk of data analysis must be done near completion of the program. At this time reexamine data and review your earlier opinions with respect to subsequent results.
- During this data review the program conclusions should be drawn.



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- Trying to organize and write a report without knowing the conclusions is like starting an automobile trip without knowing the destination.
- Therefore choose your report destination early by drawing and clearly defining the program conclusions before you begin to organize and write the report.



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- This is best done by first writing down all significant results in no particular order and then sorting them so that the results pertaining (belong as a part) to a common factor are grouped together.



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- **Selection of the data** to be used in the report is another important part of this step.
- Choose only the data necessary to help your **readers reach the conclusions you are drawing.**
- Excessive data or data only loosely **related to the conclusions** will obscure (hidden) them and confuse your readers.



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- The next step in data analysis involves **organizing the selected data into illustrations for the report.**
- **New figures and tables usually must be prepared.**
Their organization should be carefully considered because illustrations are one of the best means of emphasizing and supporting conclusions.



2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- After the illustrations have been prepared, **write the significant points about each on an attached sheet of paper.**
- What is the figure (table) supposed to show?
- How were the data obtained?
- Are there any qualifications to the figure (table)?

This information will be useful when you begin writing the report.



Illustrations

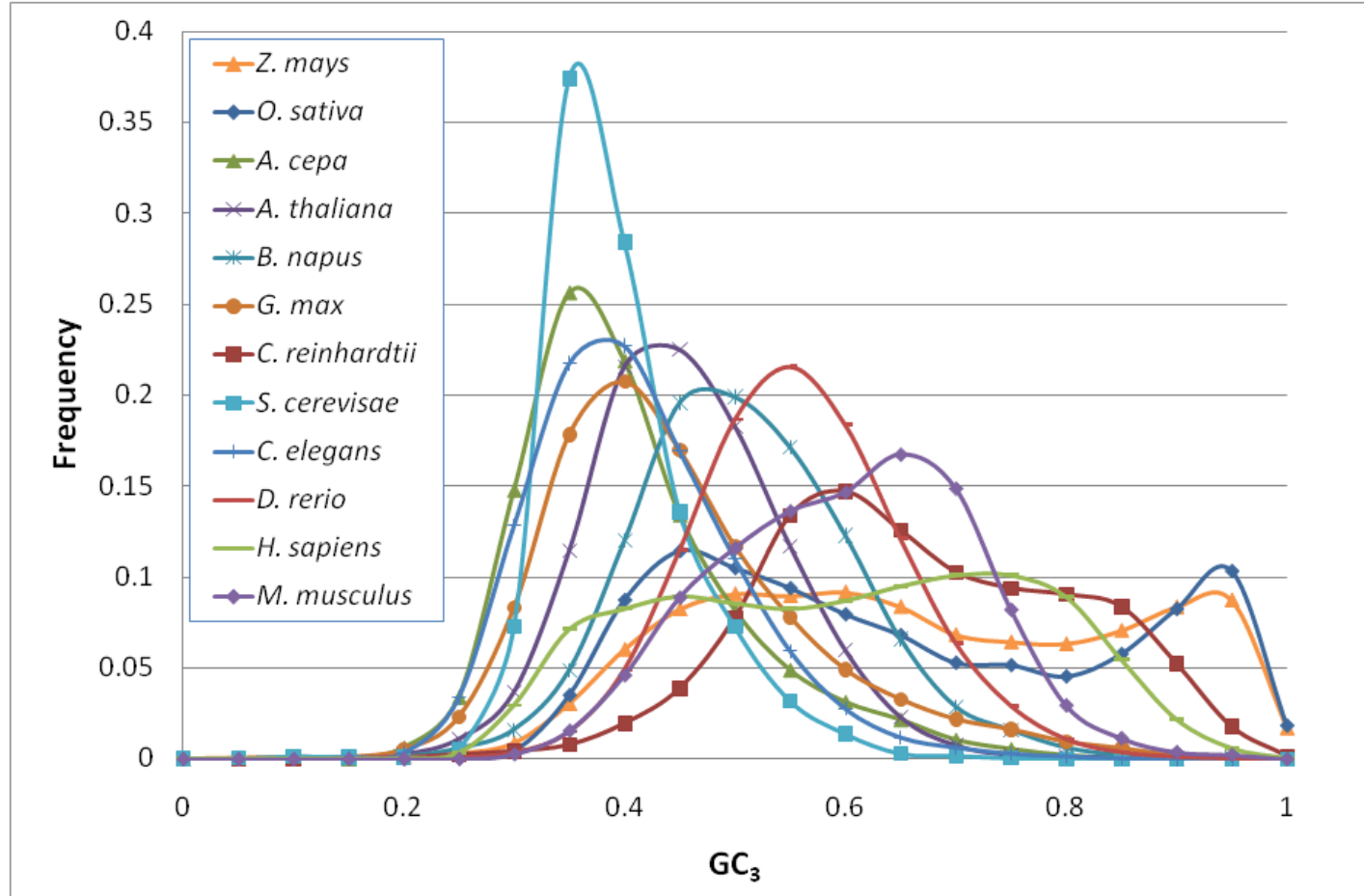
This term refers to all of the graphical parts of a paper or presentation. Some technical writers use the term "graphics", or for presentations, "visual aids"

Figures

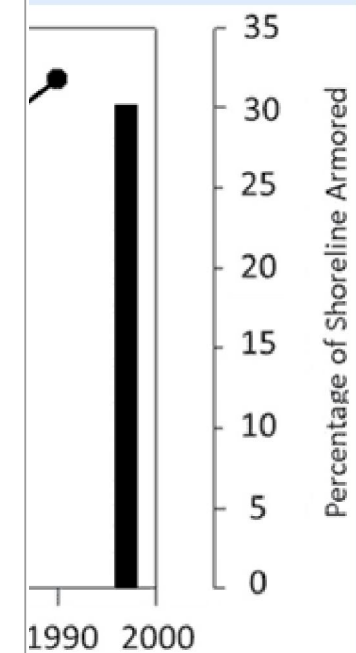
The term "figure" refers to anything that is not a table. Figures include:

Tables

The term "table" refers to an illustration in which data (numbers or words) are placed in columns and/or rows



in Mobile Bay, Alabama.



1999, this figure depicts the the vertical bars in the main graph show the proportion of armoring while the line depicts the increasing population levels for Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

2- Analyzing and Sorting the Results

- Before beginning to outline your report you may find one additional step useful—**writing a limiting sentence**. This is a single sentence that states the subject, scope, and purpose of the report.
- Preparing a limiting sentence is not simple. **It takes additional time and effort.** But it is a worthwhile exercise because **it forces you to focus your attention on exactly what you expect the report to do.**



ICE BRAKE

Success for YOU...

- Tell the person next to you what you did last semester



3- Outlining the Report

- It involves the **planning needed to prepare a clear report** that is logically organized, concise, and easy to read.
- **The outlining stage** is a natural progression from the **analysis** and **sorting stage**.
- In the **sorting stage concentration is on what results should be presented in a report**. In the **outlining stage attention is directed to how these results should be presented**.



3- Outlining the Report

- The revised outline should contain **descriptive headings of each significant part of the report.**
- Each **heading, subheading, sub-subheading, etc.,** should have as much detail as you will need to trigger your thoughts when **you later write the corresponding sentences and paragraphs.**
- Descriptive headings usually make a report more interesting to read. **But you must exercise originality to make them brief but clear.**



- **Layout**

- The most common system is the decimal notation system.

- 1. *Introduction*
 - 1.1 —————
 - 1.11 —————
 - 1.2 —————
 - 1.21 —————
 - 2. *Methodology*
 - 2.1 —————

Correct!

3- Outlining the Report

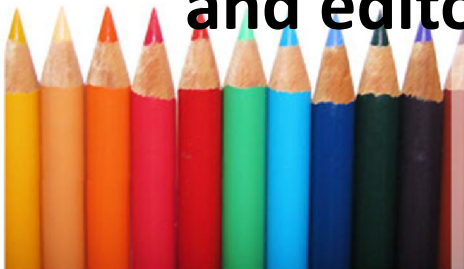
- Thorough outlining will make both **writing and reading the report easier**. Study your outline carefully to be certain that each **item blends into a logical plan and ordered presentation**.



PresenterMedia

4- Writing the Rough Draft

- With a logically **organized outline** and the necessary **illustrations already prepared**, writing the rough draft should be much easier than you thought.
- **The rough draft** should be the last of several versions, each an improvement of the preceding one.
- This final version is considered a "rough" draft because it still must go through a series of technical and editorial reviews. .



Steps to write the Rough Draft

- Try to **start writing the first version of the draft** immediately after completing the outline while the ideas developed there are still fresh in your mind. .
- **Concentrate** on what you want to say rather than how to say it. .
- **Keep writing down the thoughts** as they flow into your mind, following your outline.



Steps to write the Rough Draft

- Avoid **going back** over what you have written until you are through writing.
- Then **review** this version—but only for its **technical** content.
- **Are** all of the ideas you wanted to express include? **Have** you included irrelevant ideas? **Does** the report organization still seem logical?



Second version of Rough Draft

- **In the second version** of the rough draft, **writing style** becomes important. With the technical content in a well-organized form from the first version, this is the time to **concentrate on how you say it.**



5- Revising the Rough Draft

- Revising a draft is comparable to painting a **house**: the appearance is improved without influencing the structure. But a **report's "appearance" (readability) may determine whether or not it is read.**



5- Revising the Rough Draft

- Successful technical writers use a wide variety of methods to review and revise. **One of the best involves three separate reviews of the report:**

1- The first review **is of the material in the report:**

Are the conclusions valid? **Is** sufficient information given to support the conclusions? **Is** enough background information given to explain the results?

Have all irrelevant ideas been deleted? **Are** the illustrations pertinent and necessary?



5- Revising the Rough Draft

2- The second review is of the mechanics and organization.

Are the subject and purpose clearly stated? Does the report flow smoothly from topic to topic? **Are** the relations between topics clear? **Is** each illustration clear and properly labeled? **Are** all required parts of the report included?



5- Revising the Rough Draft

3- The third review is of spelling and grammar, particularly punctuation and sentence structure.

Is each sentence written effectively? **Are** the sentences varied in length and complexity to avoid monotony? **Are** the words specific rather than vague? Have all unnecessary words been deleted?





Questions